

Memorandum
Teaching of Evolution in Indiana -
The Indiana Department Of Education's Position

To: Interested Citizens of Indiana

From: Jennifer Hicks, Ph.D., Science Curriculum Specialist

Re: The Teaching of Evolution

The Department of Education provides science academic standards that define what Indiana students should know and be able to do in the area of science. Content regarding evolution is included.

The Indiana Academic Standards 2000 - Science were developed by a committee selected from a pool of more than 100 concerned educators and citizens from around the state who had applied to participate in this process. The committee is composed of approximately sixty, K-12 science teachers, science educators and scientists from Indiana's universities, administrators, parents, and representatives from business and industry.

The Department of Education does not identify science content that should not be taught. Curriculum directors in Indiana schools may choose to supplement their local curriculum as they respond to the desires of the community. However, content taught in the area of science must be consistent with the nature of science (see the [Indiana Academic Standards 2000 - Science](#)), as science itself is the connection between theory and experiment.

This means that the explanations for how the world works must be based upon physical evidence and subjected to experimental verification as well as peer review. If better explanations for the evidence arise, older explanations are left behind, which is the belief system upon which science is founded. This does not mean that belief systems based upon sacred texts or traditions are to be discounted, for they are not lesser or greater than a "scientific" viewpoint. Understanding the difference and the nature of science itself is the key, and it is something of which students should be made aware.

Should a community decide that it would be in the better interests of its students to supplement instruction by exposing the students to various accounts of the origin of the universe from cultural, mythological, or religious sources, it may do so in a comparative format that does not espouse a specific doctrine or belief system from a particular faith tradition. The espousing of one faith tradition or set of beliefs over another or others is inappropriate in a public school context. Please contact [Jennifer Hicks](#) at 317-232-9185 if you have any questions.